

Trumpet Weekly

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This aerial photograph shows several Chinese structures, including a two-level concrete fort armed with guns on the rooftop. It was built in the western section of the disputed Spratly Islands located in the South China Sea.



Literally and Littorally, China Is Gaining Ground

Jeremiah Jacques | April 15

NEW SATELLITE PHOTOS SHOW THAT CHINA IS GAINING GROUND, literally, in the South China Sea. The images show Chinese workers dredging up huge amounts of sand from the seafloor and pumping it onto submerged coral reefs. The workers are then paving over the sand, transforming the coral into an artificial island. With every scoop of sand, the island grows larger.

Were this project happening in Chinese waters, it wouldn't be controversial (except for environmental reasons). It would likely be seen as an operation similar to the Netherlands fighting back

the sea with dikes and windmills, reclaiming land to increase the country's landmass. Or it might be viewed as something like the United Arab Emirates creating massive artificial islands off its coasts. But the site of the Chinese project is Mischief Reef. That's 800 miles from China, but only 150 miles from the Philippines. China *claims* ownership of Mischief, but according to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, it belongs to the Philippines. It falls well within the Philippines' 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone.

For that reason, the Philippines is upset by the Chinese project.

“It’s a major or critical concern,” said Philippine Defense Ministry spokesman Peter Galvez on April 9. “They have to dismantle it. It’s a concern not only for our country and region, but for the whole international community.”

More Than Mischief

Mischief Reef isn’t the only place where China is creating artificial land. China claims ownership of about 90 percent of the vast South China Sea and is also reclaiming land on six other disputed reefs. So far, Beijing has created more than 1.5 square miles of landmass on the reefs. And the operations are increasing, both in pace and scale.

On the new islands, China is building fuel storage facilities, ports, surveillance posts and airstrips. Many experts are convinced that China’s intentions are to militarize the islands, which would enhance China’s ability to project power in the region.

James Hardy of IHS Jane’s Defense Weekly said: “We can see that this is a methodical, well-planned campaign to create a chain of air and sea capable fortresses across the center of the Spratly Islands chain.”

On April 13, Vasily Kashin, senior research fellow at Moscow’s Center for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies spoke to the *Trumpet* about the trend. He said the economic potential of these artificial islands is also important: “[T]hey can establish not just military presence, but some symbolic economic activity as well.”

Weak Washington

China’s illegal operations present a difficulty for the United States. That’s not just because the Philippines is a U.S. treaty ally, but also because Beijing is building the islands very rapidly. At the current pace, Beijing’s claim of owning the South China Sea could become reality before anything can be done to challenge it.

Yet every indication shows that U.S. President Barack Obama is unwilling to confront the Chinese activity with anything beyond the gentlest rhetoric. Last week, he said that by developing the islands, China “is not necessarily abiding by international norms and rules and is using its sheer size and muscle to force countries into subordinate positions.” Not *necessarily*? Such statements provide no comfort to the Philippines and other smaller Asian nations. But the idea of being drawn into a conflict with China is nearly too unbearable for Washington to contemplate. So the most the Obama administration will do is to gingerly chide Beijing, and look the other way.

The Chinese leadership knows that as long as Mr. Obama is in power, U.S. involvement in the matter is unlikely to go beyond light-handed statements. This fuels China’s increasingly provocative behavior. Approximately 21 months remain of President Obama’s second term. China knows that for the next 21 months, it is unlikely that anyone will challenge its illegal and pushy maneuvers in the South China Sea.

For more, read [“Will China Call America’s Military Bluff?”](#)

 Follow Jeremiah Jacques

MIDDLE EAST

The Iran Deal: Anatomy of a Disaster

Charles Krauthammer, *Washington Post* | April 9

IT WAS BUT A YEAR AND A HALF AGO THAT BARACK OBAMA endorsed the objective of abolition when he said that Iran’s heavily fortified Fordow nuclear facility, its plutonium-producing heavy-water reactor, and its advanced centrifuges were all unnecessary for a civilian nuclear program. The logic was clear: Since Iran was claiming to be pursuing an exclusively civilian program, these would have to go.

Yet under the deal Obama is now trying to sell, not one of these is to be dismantled. Indeed, Iran’s entire nuclear infrastructure is kept intact, just frozen or repurposed for the length of the deal (about a decade). Thus Fordow’s centrifuges will keep spinning. They will now be fed xenon, zinc and germanium instead of uranium. But that means they remain ready at any time to revert from the world’s most heavily (indeed comically) fortified medical isotope facility to a bomb-making factory.

And upon the expiration of the deal, conceded Obama Monday on NPR, Iran’s breakout time to a nuclear bomb will be “almost down to zero,” i.e., it will be able to produce nuclear weapons at will and without delay.

And then there’s cheating. Not to worry, says Obama. We have guarantees of compliance: “unprecedented inspections” and “snapback” sanctions.

The inspection promises are a farce. We haven’t even held the Iranians to their *current* obligation to come clean with the International Atomic Energy Agency on their previous nuclear activities. The IAEA charges Iran with stonewalling on 11 of 12 issues.

As veteran nuclear expert David Albright points out, that makes future verification impossible—how can you determine what’s been illegally changed or added if you have no baseline? Worse, there’s been no mention of the only verification regime with real teeth—at-will, unannounced visits to any facility, declared or undeclared. The joint European-Iranian statement spoke only of “enhanced access through agreed procedures,” which doesn’t remotely suggest anywhere/anytime inspections. And on Thursday, Iran’s supreme leader ruled out any “extraordinary supervision measures.”

The IAEA hasn’t been allowed to see the Parchin weaponization facility in 10 years. And the massive Fordow complex was disclosed not by the IAEA but [by Iranian dissidents](#).

Yet even if violations are found, what then? First, they have to be certified by the IAEA. Which then reports to the United Nations, where Iran has the right to challenge the charge. Which then has to be considered, argued and adjudicated. Which then presumably goes to the Security Council where China, Russia and sundry

anti-Western countries will act as Iran's lawyers. Which all would take months—after which there is no guarantee that China and Russia will ratify the finding anyway.

As for the “snapback” sanctions—our last remaining bit of pressure—they are equally fantastic. There's no way sanctions will be re-imposed once they have been lifted. It took a decade to weave China, Russia and the Europeans into the current sanctions infrastructure. Once gone, it doesn't snap back. ...

You set out to prevent proliferation and you trigger it. You set out to prevent an Iranian nuclear capability and you legitimize it. You set out to constrain the world's greatest exporter of terror threatening every one of our allies in the Middle East and you're on the verge of making it the region's economic and military hegemon.

What is the alternative, asks the president? He's repeatedly answered the question himself: No deal is better than a bad deal.

Abdullah's Warning

New York Post | April 13

WILL PRESIDENT OBAMA NOW GIVE JORDAN'S KING ABDULLAH the Benjamin Netanyahu treatment?

The Israeli prime minister isn't the only Mideast leader publicly raising doubts on the administration's nuclear negotiations with Iran.

Interviewed by Fox News' Bret Baier, the Jordanian monarch echoed Bibi

Noting that Iran now has a presence in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan and Pakistan, the king told Baier: “You've got to connect all these dots together. All these issues are areas of instability.... We can't discuss them in isolation.”

This isn't the first time Abdullah has questioned Washington's understanding of the Middle East. Two years ago, he lashed out at the State Department's naivety on the Muslim Brotherhood,

whose leaders he called “wolves in sheep's clothing.” ...

And the president can't dismiss Abdullah's comments by suggesting he's under the influence of Republicans and neo-cons. ...

As we've noted before, Abdullah is America's best friend in the Arab world, the leader of a modernizing and relatively democratic regime that finds itself in constant political peril.

The White House ignored his last wake-up call—and was caught flatfooted by the coup that later dislodged the Muslim Brotherhood government in Egypt.

Now Abdullah warns that Iran's nuclear ambitions are firmly linked to its warring across the Middle East.

If Team Obama ignores his call to deal with both threats as one, it will reap a far greater whirlwind.

Terrorist Groups Now Have More Antitank Guided Missiles Than Ever

War Is Boring | April 15

FIRE UP YOUTUBE OR TWITTER AND YOU CAN FOLLOW AMERICA'S covert weapons pipeline as it goes awry in Syria. Videos and pictures show American TOW antitank guided missiles moving from handpicked rebel proxy groups into the arms of global jihadists such as Jabhat al-Nusra.

But America isn't the only country whose weapons shipments are getting away from their intended recipients in the Middle East.

With much less media fanfare, Russia's shipments of Kornet antitank guided missiles to its allies have leaked into the hands of terrorist groups.

In Iraq, Syria, Sudan and elsewhere, both state militaries and insurgents use Kornet weapons on the battlefield. The proliferating missiles raise the threat that terrorist groups could use them off the battlefield to kill civilians. ...

Thanks to the shifting battle lines in Syria, the [Assad] regime's missile stockpiles are occasionally vulnerable to looting and theft. ...

Outside of Syria, Russia has found new customers for the Kornet, both state and non-state, leading to new threats of proliferation.

Iraqi media outlets reported that Baghdad's army ordered Kornets and used them for the first time in September 2014. If the U.S. experience arming Iraq is any guide, Iraq's slipshod accounting and loose security puts the weapons at risk of slipping from state control.

The Iraqi military has long been a source of weapons for Shiite militias.

Iran, which has provided arms to Iraqi militia proxies in Iraq, also has a version of the Kornet, the Dehlaviyeh. But its origin—reverse engineered or produced under license from Russia—is unclear. ...

In Ukraine, Armament Research found further evidence that pro-Russia rebels are using Kornets. Pictures from the fighting near Luhansk and Starobesheve show fragments of Kornet missiles—missiles which *aren't* in the Ukrainian military's arsenals.

And in Sudan, the group discovered that Russian Kornet shipments to Khartoum have—once again—landed in the hands of insurgents from the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North. ...

In a 2011 attack, Hamas critically wounded a child when the group fired a Kornet at an Israeli school bus.

But now relatively advanced antitank weapons have spread even *further*. ...

With Russia dumping Kornets on its allies, the threat to civilians may be greater—and linger long after the current wars end.

Hezbollah: Saudi Arabia to Pay 'Heavy Price' Over Yemen 'Genocide' **Associated Press | April 13**

THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE MILITANT LEBANESE HEZBOLLAH group lashed out at Saudi Arabia on Monday, accusing the kingdom of committing “genocide” with its airstrikes campaign that has been targeting Yemen’s Shiite rebels for over two weeks.

In a wide-ranging interview with the Associated Press, Sheikh Naim Kassem said Saudi Arabia made a “strategic mistake” by interfering in Yemen’s internal affairs and warned that the kingdom will “pay a heavy price” for the campaign. ...

The Saudi campaign has also turned Yemen into a new proxy war between the kingdom and Iran, which has backed the Houthis, though Tehran denies aiding the rebels militarily. Hezbollah, a Lebanese Shiite group, is a close Iran ally, and enjoys funding and support from Teheran for its activities in both Lebanon and Syria. ...

His comments were among the harshest so far from Hezbollah against the Saudi-led campaign and also echoed those of

Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who last week also called the Saudi airstrikes a “genocide.”

While the Lebanese Iranian-backed group has sometimes criticized Saudi Arabia in the past, it has always been careful to maintain a level of respect, particularly in light of the kingdom’s large support among the Lebanese Sunnis.

The Yemen campaign has already featured prominently in a bitter war of words between Lebanese pro- and anti-Iranian politicians. ...

“Psalm 83 tells us the nations that will *not* be allied with Iran when Germany and Europe conquer that nation and radical Islam.”
Gerald Flurry, “A Mysterious Prophecy,”
Trumpet, May-June 2011

EUROPE

In Flames (II)

GermanForeignPolicy.com | April 15

THE SAUDI-LED AGGRESSION COALITION’S AIR ATTACKS ON Houthi rebel positions in Yemen are being carried out with German fighter planes. This has been reported by the Saudi news portal Arab News, the broadcaster Al Arabiya (United Arab Emirates), as well as a specialized Italian Internet portal using video documentation from Saudi Arabia’s King Khalid Air Base as its source. According to these sources, the Saudi Air Force is not only using older models of the Tornado, produced jointly by Germany, Great Britain and Italy, but the Eurofighter, produced by Germany, Great Britain, Italy and Spain as well. Tornados are thought to have been used already back in 2009 in Saudi air attacks against the Houthi rebels. Riyadh first used Eurofighters in February 2015 for attacks on the Islamic State. Arab News currently reports that the Eurofighters are executing precision bombing in Yemen. Saudi Arabia had ordered 72 Typhoon Eurofighters, of which a large portion has already been delivered. Though Great Britain stands as its merchant, Germany had played a significant role in its fabrication.

Germany is also politically supporting its closest Middle East ally, Saudi Arabia, in its latest war. Although German politicians are showing restraint in making public statements, the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs has repeatedly stated that it prefers a “political solution” to the conflict. A speaker for the ministry has regularly reiterated that according to Germany’s legal interpretation, the Saudi-led coalition’s air attacks are “legitimate under international law.” Riyadh has merely “intervened at the request

of the Yemeni president in a highly dramatic situation.” Without question, this is admissible. “According to the rules of international law, it is legitimate, to render emergency aid at the request of a legitimate head of state.” In this respect, the German government has “no reservations about the international legitimacy of the Saudis’ course of action.” ...

The Saudi war coalition is unable to halt the advance of the Houthis, who only recently took control of the seaport, Aden. Yemen is facing a total collapse similar to that in Afghanistan in the late 1980s, and currently in Libya. Nevertheless, the aggression is being politically supported by Germany and is receiving military and intelligence aid from the U.S.A. ... U.S. Forces have established a “joint coordination planning cell” in the Saudi operation center and dispatched a 20-member military coordination team to interact with the Gulf allies.

The war must be viewed in the context of a regional power struggle and Western geostrategic interests. On the one hand, Saudi Arabia and Iran have always been rivals in a struggle for hegemony in the Persian Gulf. Iran has had a clear advantage since the West has virtually eliminated Iraq, another Iranian rival in 2003. In this power struggle, the West supports Riyadh, considered more acquiescent. German arms manufacturers have significantly helped to upgrade the Saudi armed forces. ... Yemeni President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi has been a strong ally of Saudi Arabia and the West Yemen’s seaport Aden is of great geostrategic importance because of its location at the Bab el-Mandeb Strait,

the access to the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea, to the Suez Canal and the Mediterranean. Henner Fürtig, Middle East expert of the

German Institute for International and Security Affairs concludes, “whoever controls Aden, has a key international position.” ...

Russian Aggression: Nordic States Extend Their Military Cooperation **Sveinung Berg Bentzrød, Aftenposten | April 9**

IN AN OP-ED PUBLISHED IN THE OSLO DAILY *AFTENPOSTEN*, FIVE Nordic ministers have signed the text outlining a very distinct military cooperation. ...

The agreement and the text—which has the form of a declaration—is a direct answer to aggressive Russian conduct in the vicinity of these Nordic nations. ...

Defense analyst Janne Haaland Matlary concludes that the message involves a joint deterrence. The cooperation described, including military exercises, is as far as you can go in pulling the non-NATO members Sweden and Finland into a community, without explicitly stating that it is a NATO community.

However, in the case of these two countries, this looks like a preparation for membership in the alliance, says Haaland Matlary.

Key concepts in the cooperation:

- More joint exercises
- Joint industrial cooperation, including the defense sector
- Joint exchange of intelligence information
- Joint processing of cybermaterial
- Will warn each other to “prevent surprises”

In November last year 12 nations met in order to prepare an extended defense cooperation: The Nordic counties plus the Baltic states, Poland, the Netherlands, Germany and Great Britain. Even the U.S.A. is taking part in a Nordic exercise this spring.

The first visible proof of the extended cooperation will probably be the exercise “Arctic Challenge” at the end of May. It will take place on Swedish and Norwegian territories. ...

Prof. Janne Haaland Matlary is a member of an expert group advising the Norwegian Defense Minister Ine Eriksen Søreide. She says Russia will perceive the message from the Nordic ministers as aggressiveness. ...

The text signed by the Nordic defense ministers and Iceland’s foreign minister opens with the following words: “The Russian

aggression against Ukraine and the illegal annexation of Crimea are violations of international law and other international agreements. Russia’s conduct represents the gravest challenge to European security. As a consequence, the security situation in the Nordic countries’ adjacent areas has become significantly worsened during the past year We must be prepared to face possible crises or incidents.”

It goes on: “We have to relate to Russia’s actions, not the Kremlin’s rhetoric. Russia is undertaking huge economic investments in its military capability. The nation’s leaders have shown that they are prepared to make practical and effective use of military means in order to reach their political goals, even when this involves violating principles of international law The Russian military is acting in a challenging way along our borders, and there have been several infringements on the borders of the Baltic nations.”

“Russia’s propaganda and political maneuvering are contributing to sowing discord between the nations, as well as inside organizations like NATO and the EU,” the text says. ...

Russia’s newfound global power and influence is triggering European leaders to demand a strong leader capable of striking back. Few things unite a nation or group of nations more than a mutual external threat. Logic informs us that Russia’s spiral toward dictatorship will trigger a fear among Europeans that will accelerate the unification of the Continent. Bible prophecy reveals that this is precisely what we can expect to occur. Russia will be a catalyst for the formation and empowerment of a united European power!

Trumpet, July 2007

Germany: Has Any Country Ever Had It So Good? **Lorcan Roch Kelly, Bloomberg | April 16**

HOW MUCH GOOD NEWS CAN ONE COUNTRY HANDLE?

If you work in the German Ministry of Finance—the *Bundesfinanzministerium*—you might be wondering that at the moment.

This morning the average yield on German sovereign debt turned negative for the first time ever.

This wasn’t the only good news today.

The German economy is built on manufacturing, and it is by far the largest car builder in the euro area. So data released this morning showing that European car sales were up 11 percent in March, the fastest growth in 15 months, is certainly welcome. ... Germany has been running a positive trade balance for decades.

Unemployment is at an all-time low, and employment in the economy has never been higher. ... Importantly for Germany, it has managed all this without stoking inflation.

With this background, it should come as no surprise that Germany is determined ... to balance its budget. ... Has any country ever had it so good?

In fact, as projections released by Eurostat this morning show, the only thing Germany is likely to have a shortage of soon is Germans.

Germany currently has the lowest proportion of population under the age of 15 of any country in the European Union

Germany Pledges Weapons to Lithuania

Deutsche Welle | April 15

Germany's defense minister, Ursula von der Leyen, wrapped up her two-day tour of the Baltic states with a visit to the Lithuanian capital on Wednesday.

Following a meeting with her Lithuanian counterpart, Juozas Olekas, the two defense ministers announced a military equipment deal which will see the purchase of heavy weapons from Germany's Bundeswehr. ...

Lithuania is to buy 12 Howitzer 2000 from the German military for €15 million (US\$15.9 million) along with the corresponding combat and weapon engagement systems. The governments

are to finalize the details in May.

Von der Leyen also confirmed that Berlin would lobby for Lithuania's bid to buy Boxer armored transport vehicles, which it must purchase from the manufacturer. The news confirmed reports in February of Vilnius considering a German company in the bidding process. ...

RELATED: "EUROPE RETHINKS ITS MILITARY AFTER UKRAINE CONFRONTATION"

ASIA



Putin Remembers Yugoslavia

Gerald Flurry,
The Key of David | April 17

RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN believes his actions in Crimea are no different than the West's actions in Yugoslavia in the '90s.



ONI Reveals Massive Chinese Naval Buildup

Washington Free Beacon | April 10

CHINA HAS DEPLOYED A NEW HIGH-SPEED ANTISHIP CRUISE MISSILE and is sharply expanding an armada of advanced guided-missile warships and submarines, according to a naval intelligence report made public Thursday.

The Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI), in its first unclassified assessment of the Chinese Navy in six years, revealed deployment of the new YJ-18 supersonic antiship cruise missile on warships and submarines that analysts say poses a major threat to U.S. and allied vessels.

China's current naval force of 300 surface ships, submarines, amphibious ships, and missile-armed patrol craft is rapidly expanding, the report says.

According to the report, China began building or launched more than 60 naval ships and vessels last year, and a similar number of warships are under construction or deployed for 2015.

"Major qualitative improvements are occurring within naval aviation and the submarine force, which are increasingly capable of striking targets hundreds of miles from the Chinese mainland," the report said, adding that despite some shortfalls, "it is

emerging as a well equipped and competent force." ...

The new YJ-18 cruise missile is deployed on the newest class of destroyer called the Luyang III, and on diesel attack submarines known as the Song/Yuan class, and nuclear-powered Shang-class attack submarines.

Andrew Erickson, a Naval War College professor, said ... "This supersonic missile could be extremely difficult for U.S. and allied ships to defend against." ... It was the first time the U.S. government has acknowledged China's deployment of the supersonic missile, which appears based on the Russian SSN-27/Klub cruise missile. ...

Rick Fisher, a Chinese military affairs expert, said the YJ-18 is also likely to be deployed in land-based and aircraft-launched versions. ...

"ONI is now suggesting, as others have already, that China could soon be projecting naval power in the same manner as the U.S. Navy," he said. "The Washington policy community has not yet started to understand, much less respond to this level of strategic challenge."



Russia Lifts Ban on Missile Sales to Iran

David Vejl | April 14

ON MONDAY, RUSSIA LIFTED ITS BAN ON THE SALE OF SOPHISTICATED air-defense systems to Iran. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said the ban was lifted due to recent progress in talks over Tehran's nuclear program. Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif applauded the decision.

The ban specifically covered the S-300 air defense missile system. The S-300 has a range of up to 125 miles. It is able to track down and strike multiple targets simultaneously.

Russia agreed in 2007 to sell the S-300 to Iran, but the United States and Israel strongly objected. The ban was put in place as a result, preventing the sale.

Israeli Intelligence Minister Yuval Steinitz said Russia's decision is a bad one: "We are very disturbed from the selling of the S-300 missiles to Iran. We think that this is wrong. We think that it will convey the wrong message to the Iranians, that at the very time that they are sponsoring terrorism all over the Middle East, they can get such kind of weapons. I think that this is another

negative impact or consequence of the Lausanne framework."

The Lausanne framework is the recently agreed nuclear framework established between Iran and the P5+1 nations in Switzerland.

United States State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf said the move is not "constructive." However, she added that the shipment does not violate any UN Security Council sanctions. She said lifting the ban should not cause problems over a final deal with Iran regarding its nuclear program.

Lifting this ban reveals how the framework deal is already giving Iran more leeway. Arming Iran with an advanced defensive weapon will only increase the aggressiveness in its foreign policy.

The *Trumpet* expects Iran to continue to gain more leeway without opposition from the U.S. For more information on what the *Trumpet* forecasts for the Middle East and Iran's growing influence, read "[America's Chamberlain?](#)"

China's Next Super Weapon Revealed: Satellite Destroyers

National Interest | April 15

CHINA WILL SOON BE ABLE TO DESTROY EVERY SATELLITE IN SPACE, a senior U.S. military official has said.

According to *Breaking Defense*, Lt. Gen. Jay Raymond, commander of the 14th Air Force, said this week that China's amassing formidable antisatellite capabilities. Raymond claimed that Beijing is already capable of holding every low-orbit satellite at

risk, and "soon every satellite in every orbit will be able to be held at risk" by China's antisatellite capabilities.

Speaking at the 31st Space Symposium in Colorado Springs this week, Raymond also confirmed that China's antisatellite missile test last July was a success. ...

China's 'One Belt, One Road' Strategy

Defense News | April 12

CHINA'S "ONE BELT AND ONE ROAD" INITIATIVE COULD USHER IN A new era that sees China as the undisputed geopolitical powerhouse in the region, experts say.

The initiative will establish new routes linking Asia, Europe and Africa. It has two parts—a new "Silk Road economic belt" linking China to Europe that cuts through mountainous regions in Central Asia; and the "maritime Silk Road" that links China's port facilities with the African coast and then pushes up through the Suez Canal into the Mediterranean Sea. ...

The "belt and road" concept is still in the planning stages, said James Holmes, a China naval specialist at the U.S. Naval War

College, and does not have any direct military implications, per se, but "it could help China ease America out of Asia over the long haul while weaning our allies away from us."

If China wants to create a parallel system in Eurasia and convince others that its system beats America's, it has to deliver the goods, Holmes said. "Ultimately, once they're hooked, it could demand more from its partners, by asking them to restrict or refuse U.S. access to their seaports"—and that is where the direct security and military implications come in. "Xi doesn't cut me in on his plans, but I suspect that's the logic driving the enterprise." ...

World Order Redrawn as New Rivalry Forms Among China, Russia, U.S.

Want China Times | April 15

THE U.S. "ASIA PIVOT" STRATEGY HAS INDIRECTLY BROUGHT about a reshaping of the power structures among Asian nations. Out of the combinations of China-Russia, China-South Korea and Japan-India, it is the fast-growing relationship between China and Russia that has attracted the most attention

and poses an increasing threat to the position of the United States as the world's dominant power.

When Li Zhanshu, director of the General Office of the Communist Party of China, and the Chinese foreign minister, Wang Yi, went to Moscow recently, both were given the red-carpet

treatment. President Vladimir Putin described Sino-Russian relations as being at their historic best. ...

The crisis over Russian intervention in Ukraine and subsequent economic sanctions on Moscow have deepened and broadened Sino-Russian cooperation in the areas of international politics, economy, defense, energy, investment, culture and technology. The value of bilateral trade has reached \$100 billion and is expected to top \$200 billion in five years. ...

While the two sides clearly have their own agendas, as far as the current stage is concerned, bilateral cooperation has at least been mutually complementary. By getting closer to Beijing, Moscow can alleviate the pressure of sanctions from the United States and its European allies. On the other hand, China can obtain advanced Russian weapons and military technology beyond its expectations. Whatever their own goals and intentions, China and Russia are bound to challenge the unipolar world order dominated by the United States once the two countries form an alliance. ...

With multiple head-to-head meetings between Xi and Putin later this year, the two countries could reach important agreements at any time. Those occasions include Xi's visit to Moscow in May, the BRICS summit and the Shanghai Cooperation

Organization meeting in July, the commemorative activities surrounding the 70th anniversary of V-E Day in May and V-J Day in September and the G-20 and APEC summits in November.

Potential agreements may involve the sale of Su-35 fighter jets to China or a joint military exercise in the Black Sea. If the two navies conduct war games in the Black Sea, it would be tantamount to a declaration that China and Russia have taken a joint posture against the United States. That could mean the start of a new Cold War in which China, Russia and the United States again engage in a three-way competition.

“America’s impulse to retreat from the world is evident everywhere you look. The Obama administration said in 2011 that it would pivot its attention away from the Middle East and toward Asia. Yet all its signals reveal its desire to withdraw from there as well. ... Both Moscow and Beijing are rapidly moving to fill the void the U.S. is leaving in this resource-rich region, and America is in no position to stop them.”

Trumpet, January 2014

China’s New S-400 Triumph Air Defense Systems Designed to Shoot Down Any Enemy Aerial Target

IB Times | April 13

CHINA HAS BECOME THE FIRST BUYER OF THE S-400 AIR DEFENSE system after signing a contract with the Russian state-run arms dealer Rosoboronexport, the company’s chief executive told Russian daily *Kommersant* on Monday. The coveted S-400 Triumph is a new generation anti-aircraft weapon system designed to shoot down any enemy aerial target, as well as intercept cruise and ballistic missiles at a range of about 250 miles.

“I will not disclose the details of the contract, but yes, China has indeed become the first buyer of this sophisticated Russian air defense system,” Rosoboronexport CEO Anatoly Isaykin said in an interview with *Kommersant*, Sputnik International News reported. “It underlines once again the strategic level of our relations.” ...

China already owned Russian-made S-300 air defense systems. The S-400 is a high-performance, wider-range upgrade to Russia’s already powerful S-300 air defense system, which was limited to about 125 miles.

Isaykin said “many countries” want to buy the S-400 systems, but “China will be the first customer” after the manufacturer and Russia’s largest defense contractor, VKO Almaz-Antey, delivers them to the Russian Defense Ministry. ...

Isaykin said if Russia works for the benefit of its Chinese partners, it “works for its own benefit as well.” Russia currently has nine anti-aircraft missile battalions equipped with the new air defense systems, Sputnik International News reported.

“When these Asia nations—extremely powerful nuclear-armed countries—begin to show solidarity with each other regarding moves like that, what does that portend for the world? I tell you it is woe to the world. It will cause many serious problems. And it is going to affect everyone.”

Gerald Flurry, Trumpet, May-June 2014

AFRICA / LATIN AMERICA

Cuba to Be Removed From U.S. List of Nations That Sponsor Terrorism

New York Times | April 14

THE WHITE HOUSE ANNOUNCED ON TUESDAY THAT PRESIDENT Obama intends to remove Cuba from the American government’s list of nations that sponsor terrorism, eliminating a major obstacle to the restoration of diplomatic relations after decades of hostilities.

The decision to remove Cuba from the list is a crucial step in Mr. Obama’s effort to turn the page on a Cold War-era dispute.

It followed a much-anticipated meeting between Mr. Obama and President Raúl Castro of Cuba on the sidelines of the Summit of the Americas meeting in Panama over the weekend, the first

such formal session between the leaders of the two countries in more than a half century.

For more than 30 years, Cuba has been on the State Department's list of state sponsors of terrorism, a designation shared only by Iran, Sudan and Syria.

Cuba's place on the list has long snarled its access to financial markets and, more recently, emerged as a sticking point in negotiations to reopen embassies that have officially been closed for five decades. ...

The State Department determined that Cuba had not engaged in terrorist activity in the past six months—a criterion for designating a country a state sponsor of terrorism—and therefore no longer belonged on the list. ...

"The world has changed, and the world has changed particularly

in Latin America," said a senior official, on the condition of anonymity in order to speak candidly about diplomatic issues. ...

"Pope Francis is from Argentina, but we shouldn't forget that the Vatican got involved in this deal as early as March 2012, when the church was led by Pope Benedict. He is the German pope emeritus, and he has friends in high places in Germany. We need to watch this carefully, because Bible prophecy shows clearly that America, Britain and the Jewish nation are in grave danger and will be double-crossed by a reconstituted German-led Holy Roman Empire."
Gerald Flurry, *Trumpet*, March 2015

What the Cape Town 'Poo Protest' Revealed

Irish Times | April 4

OVER THE PAST TWO WEEKS, A RACE DEBATE HAS ERUPTED IN South Africa with a speed and intensity that has rarely been seen since the first democratic election in 1994. Some fear it could mark the beginning of a race war if not handled carefully.

Unusually, the controversy does not relate directly to apartheid; its origins predate that regime. It has been triggered by a statue of the British colonialist and mining magnate Cecil John Rhodes on the campus of the University of Cape Town.

On March 10, Chumani Maxwele and 12 other black students at the university threw human excrement over the statue of Rhodes ...

The prominently-placed Rhodes statue looks out over the university and its 26,000 students, about half of whom are black. Pointing to Rhodes's land and mineral grabs in the early 20th century, the group of students demanded that the statue of Rhodes, and other colonial symbols, be removed. ...

Over the past two weeks, black students have expressed a deep sense of alienation that many of them still experience.

However, many whites—English-speaking whites, in particular—have shown little understanding of the students' frustrations. ...

Prof. Xolela Mangcu, senior professor in sociology at the University of Cape Town, wrote in an article this past week that his biggest fear was that black people would no longer take this kind of racial abuse and that South Africa would find itself in "the racial civil war we averted in 1994." ...

Julius Malema, opposition member of parliament and leader of the Economic Freedom Party, raised racial tensions further. ... Malema ... challenged his followers to take the statues down, using any methods necessary. ...

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It's Not About the Statues, Stupid!

Daily Maverick | April 9

ON THURSDAY EVENING, BELOW THE DRAMATIC BACKDROP OF Table Mountain, the statue of Cecil John Rhodes rose from its plinth, teetered in midair, and was then lowered onto a flatbed truck that drove it off to a place of safety. University of Cape Town (UCT) students whipped the statue and covered it in red paint as others cheered and ululated. It was the final moments of ignominy before the statue disappeared from public view. Now there are raging debates about heritage, race and the pace of transformation. But let's not forget who started this. #RhodesMustFall was driven by the UCT Students Representative Council but it is Julius Malema who planted the seed. What this saga has shown is that, politically, nothing is set in stone.

In his maiden address in Parliament last June, Economic Freedom Fighters leader Julius Malema introduced a subject that, at the time, appeared to be out of left field. He was responding to President Jacob Zuma's first State of the Nation Address of the fifth administration and started to pick apart what he called the ANC's [African National Congress] "elite pact" that seeks to protect

white minority capital and white privilege.

"This elite pact is reflected by the fact that the most prominent statue in this Parliament is a statue of Louis Botha, and the one of Nelson Mandela is very small and is hidden behind the statue of Louis Botha. Louis Botha is not our hero and cannot be a hero of a democratic South Africa. He is a colonial warmonger, who fought for the exclusion of black and indigenous people from running their own country and affairs.

"It is people like this who made white South Africans think they are superior and if we continue celebrating them, we are equally perpetuating white supremacy. The statue of Botha outside this Parliament must go down, because it represents nothing of what a democratic South Africa stands for," Malema said. He went on to say: "We must do away with self-hate and embrace who we are and what we stand for. The time for black majority to benefit from the natural, mineral and the beauty of their country is now and can never be postponed." ...

This week, the statue of Louis Botha outside Parliament that

Malema spoke of was defaced. This prompted a statement from the office of the ANC chief whip Stone Sizani. “The malicious damage of statues at certain locations in the cover of darkness signifies nothing but cowardice by those seeking to opportunistically piggyback on the publicity generated by the successful campaign led by the progressive students of the University of Cape Town regarding the statue of Cecil Rhodes.

“There’s nothing courageous or heroic by peacetime ‘fighters’ or ‘revolutionaries’ who go around kicking doors that are already open and subverting due processes merely for media attention,” the ANC said. ...

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ANGLO-AMERICA

The Critics of Islam Were Right

Mike Dobbins, *The Christian Post* | April 13

FOR YEARS I WAS AN APOLOGIST FOR ISLAM, AS REGRETTABLY, many still remain.

I only read books and believed those who painted Islam in a peaceful, glowing light. I made excuses for radical Muslims and lived in a flood of denial that religious teachings could still, in this modern age of drones and clones, motivate a person to commit evil. I criticized the numerous atheists including Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Sam Harris and Bill Maher warning of the dangers inherent in Islamic doctrines, recklessly labeling them Islamophobes.

Today I’m writing to say I’m sorry We who have blindly defended Islam and called you Islamophobes are tragically wrong.

My mind first began to change last May when I read an interview by Sam Harris with Ayaan Hirsi Ali in which she addresses the misapplication of the term *Islamophobia*. This article, along with the seeds atheists planted over the years urging me to do more research, motivated me to delve into the religion. I read the Koran, many Hadith, the biography of Mohammed, the history of jihad, and Islamic law. This is what I learned:

The critics of Islam are right. Islam is intrinsically, alarmingly violent, hateful and oppressive on a scale greater than all other major religions combined. To say that radical Islamists are motivated to commit atrocities and embrace oppression based on religious doctrine is the understatement of the century.

I, like most defenders of Islam, was ignorant, naive and in denial. I wrongly assumed all holy books have enough good messages to offset the bad. I wrongly assumed that, like Jesus, Mohammed promoted peace, love and non-violence. I wrongly assumed criticism of Islam equates to criticism of all Muslims. ...

By not acknowledging the Islamic link to radical violence and hate, smearists have unwittingly allowed it to spread. ...

We who have carelessly thrown around the Islamophobe label including Glen Greenwald, Reza Aslan and Karen Armstrong should lower our heads in shame and guilt. ... We must now live with the knowledge that we’ve abandoned and betrayed our principles. Though we claim the mantle of human rights, free speech and equality, we lack the courage of our convictions when it offends someone. We make the cowardly lion look like Churchill.

In reality, those who criticize Islam, especially reform-minded Muslims, are the bravest of the brave. They are literally putting their lives at risk by the simple act of criticizing the Koran, Mohammed and Sharia.

It is the critics of Islam who are working steadfastly for equality and human rights for Muslims as apologists wallow in denial. ...

Labeling every critic of Islam an Islamophobe has seriously diminished the smearists credibility. ...

Islam is a man-made religion (emphasis on the man part) and like all man-made religions, has serious moral shortcomings and requires rigorous criticism. Rather than self-censoring and abiding by Islamic blasphemy laws, we should be defending the importance of free speech, encouraging Islam to purge itself of blasphemy laws, and demonstrating the benefits free speech can bring to Islam. ...

But by no means take my word for it. You owe it to yourself to do your own research and see if you too find a connection between Islamic teachings and Islamic violence and hate. I challenge everyone, especially smearists, to read the Koran, biographies of Mohammed, the history of jihad, and the political ideology of Islam.

Perhaps you too will notice the Koran’s recurring theme of hating non-believers and the desert-like absence of loving and inclusive passages to offset the vile and violent ones.

Perhaps you too will notice how Mohammed’s violent life mirrors that of members of the Islamic State and that it would be dangerous for any person to follow in Mohammed’s footsteps.

Perhaps you too will notice how there is no separation of church and state in Islam, and that most Islamic governments place Islamic law above secular law.

It would be one thing if Islamic doctrines said Muslims should love non-Muslims and love their enemy. It would be one thing if the prophet Mohammed preached non-violence. It would be one thing if Islamic laws supported equality for women, minorities, freedom of expression, and valued human rights. It would be one thing if the Koran taught the golden rule.

It is because they do the complete opposite that I am now speaking out.

“I will even appoint over you terror I will send a faintness into their hearts ... and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth’ (Leviticus 26:16, 36). Truly, terrorists, mostly from smaller countries with little say politically or militarily on the world scene, must be glorying in their newfound power, provoking dread in the citizens of mighty America.”

Gerald Flurry, *Trumpet*, November 2001

Wave of Threats Prompts Creation of Edmonton Counterterrorism Unit

Globe and Mail | April 14

THE EDMONTON POLICE WILL BE SETTING UP A COUNTERTERRORISM unit as law enforcement across Alberta struggles to investigate an unprecedented number of terror suspects and threats.

Edmonton police Chief Rod Knecht, once the second-in-command at the RCMP, says federal and local resources are stretched thin in Alberta's capital city as police investigate *jihadi* recruiters and financiers, and terror conspiracies.

The move comes as municipal police forces across the country are being asked to do more to stop Canadian extremists, and as the RCMP is pulling hundreds of officers from drug and crime probes and transferring them to counterterrorism efforts.

"We're seeing significant threats, pedal to the metal," Chief Knecht told the *Globe and Mail* on Friday. "Even in my time with the RCMP, it has never been as busy as it is now from a counterterrorism perspective. Resourcing is stretched to the limit."

Australia Policy Ends Payouts to Citizens Who Refuse Vaccines

Activist Post | April 13

IN A STUNNING EXAMPLE OF THE DISREGARD HELD TOWARD THE rights of individual Australians, the Australian government has not only passed measures to "tighten" guidelines on the ability to obtain religious exemptions to vaccinations but has also passed a "no jab no pay" policy ending government welfare payouts to those families who refuse to vaccinate.

Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott recently announced the new policy to eliminate the "conscientious objector" status for individuals who are morally, evidentially or philosophically opposed to vaccination beginning in January 2016.

Abbot and Social Services Minister Scott Morrison said in a joint statement that "[t]he choice made by families not to immunize their children is not supported by public policy or medical research nor should such action be supported by taxpayers in the form of child-care payments."

For that reason, families that refuse to vaccinate their children will lose these child-care benefits, costing many up to \$11,000 per

year. ...

The creation of the specialized unit in Canada's northernmost provincial capital is a sign of the times, when the threats of radicalization and terrorist acts are no longer limited to the largest cities. ...

Canadian municipal police forces do not generally have units dedicated solely to fighting terrorism. After the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, the federal government created specialized squads in Canada's biggest cities known as Integrated National Security Enforcement Teams (INSET)

Lately, some police have wondered if the centralized INSET model works when extremists seem to be popping up in all corners of the country at once. ...

"Historically, the thinking is that the problem is in Toronto, Montreal or Vancouver," Chief Knecht said. "The message now is that the threat can be anywhere." ...

Third and Most Spectacular Economic Collapse in 15 Years Will Devastate the World

Michael Pento, King World News | April 12

THE RECENT STOCK MARKET VOLATILITY HAS CAUSED THE MAJOR averages to lose nearly all their gains for 2015. However, it is clear stock prices are still extremely overvalued by virtually every metric, especially when viewed in the absence of GDP and earnings growth.

For starters, the Cyclically Adjusted PE Ratio on the S&P 500 is currently 27, whereas the normal level for this longer-term valuation metric is just 15. Also, the ratio of Total Market Cap to GDP is currently at 125 percent. This reading, which measures the value of all stock prices in relation to the economy, is the second highest in history outside of the tech bubble and is far above the 110 percent level witnessed in 2007....

And with a median PE ratio of all NYSE stocks at a record-high 22, there can't be any doubt that stock prices are at extreme valuations.

But these lofty valuations sit atop negative earnings growth and a faltering economy. The Atlanta Fed's GDP model currently shows Q1 2015 economic growth will come in at a paltry 0.2 percent annualized rate. And S&P Capital IQ predicts Q1 earnings will fall 2.9 percent, while also projecting Q2 earnings growth will contract 1.8 percent.

So how can stock prices remain at record high valuations, especially given the fact that such levels seem egregiously ridiculous within the context of no growth? The answer is simply that central banks have given investors no other alternatives. Banks pay you zip on your deposits and sovereign debt offers little return, even when going out 10 years on the yield curve.

Central banks have forced investors to play musical chairs with their money; but this dangerous game has millions of

players and just a handful of chairs. When the music finally stops, investors will find that bids for stocks have become very rare. ...

If April's data on Durable Goods, Industrial Production, Factory Orders or Retail Sales is reported with a minus sign, investors should run for the exit.

Jamie Dimon Says 'Unprecedented' Treasury Move Is Warning Shot for Investors **Financial Post | April 9**

JPMORGAN CHASE & CO. HEAD JAMIE DIMON SAID LAST YEAR'S volatility in U.S. Treasuries is a "warning shot" to investors and that the next financial crisis could be exacerbated by a shortage of the securities. ...

The October 15 gyrations, when Treasury yields fluctuated by almost 0.4 percentage point, was an "unprecedented move" that would have serious consequences in a stressed environment, Dimon, the New York-based bank's chairman and chief executive officer, said in a letter Wednesday to shareholders. Treasuries are supposed to be among the most stable securities.

Wary of Natural Disaster, NY Fed Bulks Up in Chicago **Reuters | April 14**

THE NEW YORK BRANCH OF THE U.S. FEDERAL RESERVE, WARY that a natural disaster or other eventuality could shut down its market operations as it approaches an interest rate hike, has added staff and bulked up its satellite office in Chicago.

Some market technicians have transferred from New York and others were hired at the office housed in the Chicago Fed, according to several people familiar with the build-out that began about two years ago, after Hurricane Sandy struck Manhattan.

Officials believe the Chicago staffers can now handle all of the market operations that are done daily out of the New York Fed, which is the U.S. central bank's main conduit to Wall Street.

The satellite office in the Midwest readies the New York Fed for perhaps the most delicate U.S. interest-rate hike ever. With

[I]nvestors should pay close attention to April's economic data, the Fed's strategy surrounding its first rate hike, and also keep a close eye on the long end of the yield curve. That is, if they want to avoid getting consumed by the third and most spectacular collapse in equity prices in the last 15 years.

Dimon, 59, cited the incident as he waded into a debate about whether bank regulations implemented after the 2008 financial crisis exacerbate price declines by limiting the ability of Wall Street banks to make markets. It's just a matter of time until some political, economic or market event triggers another financial crisis, he said, without predicting one is imminent.

The Treasuries move was "an event that is supposed to happen only once in every 3 billion years or so," Dimon wrote. A future crisis could be worsened because there "is a greatly reduced supply of Treasuries to go around." ...

rates having been near zero for more than six years, and markets flooded with reserves, the Fed will rely on an array of new tools to help it tighten policy, likely later this year.

Two of the sources, which include market participants and Fed officials, and who spoke under condition of anonymity, said the Chicago office was partly protection against a possible cyber-attack against the New York Fed. In February, Fed Chair Janet Yellen told a congressional panel the central bank is addressing "ever escalating (cyber) threats to our operations."

But the main reason for the build-out 700 miles to the west appeared to be the need to have staff ready at all times in case of disaster. ...

British Air Power Is Fading Away **David Axe, War Is Boring | April 14**

THE UK MINISTRY OF DEFENSE HAS RELEASED AN ACCOUNTING OF all the aircraft in Royal Air Force, Royal Navy and British Army service—and the overall tally is tiny ... and getting tinier.

As of March this year, the air forces of the United Kingdom possess no more than 362 combat-ready warplanes and drones plus 249 helicopters—a mere 611 military aircraft. ...

It's worth noting that the United Kingdom is the world's fifth-biggest military spender ... but that \$50 billion doesn't translate into a lot of war-ready hardware. ...

Drilling into the data, which the blog Think Defense first brought to our attention, the weakness of UK airpower is even more evident. The 362 ready warplanes include just 59 Tornado and 89 Typhoon jet fighters. Another 28 Tornados and 38 Typhoons are in maintenance.

Even if the RAF's mechanics worked overtime and managed to get all of the fighters onto the flight line, the kingdom's war fleet

would number just 214 fast jets.

By comparison, the U.S. Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps combined possess 2,800 fighters. Russia and China each boast around 1,500 combat jets.

And as bad as the situation is now, the trends point to an even smaller UK air arsenal in the near future. In 2006, the RAF operated around 220 war-ready fighters, dropping to 160 in 2009 and 148 this year.

But the Tornados will retire in 2019 and the Defense Ministry has announced it will also dispose of the 55 oldest Typhoons around the same time, leaving the RAF with just 105 or so *total* fighters five years from now, not all of which will be available for combat.

To be fair, the UK plans to acquire at least 48 new F-35 stealth fighters—and these could boost the RAF's front-line combat strength back to around 150 jets by the early 2020s. ...